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THE DILEMMAS  
OF  
LABOUR AND EDUCATION.

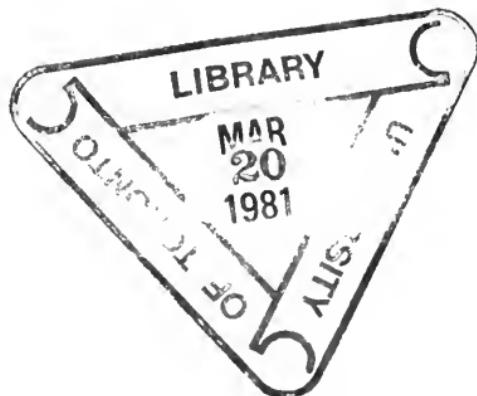


THE DILEMMAS  
OF  
LABOUR AND EDUCATION

BY  
AKIN KÁROLY

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## INTRODUCTION.

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PROBLEMS of government are the most arduous of any the human mind has to deal with, and human agency has to cope with. In such, we have to consider Man, as a mere physical creature already hard to understand, in his more complicated aspects and relations, as a moral being, the product of time, customs, laws, and traditions. Those who cultivate the so-called exact sciences are fully aware how difficult it is to ascertain by observation all the more important elements that enter into any physical phenomenon; while those who have penetrated into the higher regions of mathematics are cognizant how clumsy algebra, and even the more refined calculus, proves itself whenever it has to deal with the combined influence of more than a very limited number of shifting elements. Mathe-

micians then must stop short at what are called approximate solutions, that of necessity involve error; the which, as experience has so frequently shown, will practically crop out in the most unexpected quarters. Now, if mathematics, that wonderful instrument which facilitates the work of the mind in similar fashion as machinery favours the labour of the hand,—and that notwithstanding its prodigious modern progress,—is yet so helpless and imperfect, what can we expect of mere ordinary reasoning in vague or ill-defined words, and in loose, contradictory, or meaningless phrases? If the steam-hammer will not break a very hard nut, shall we expect to crush it with our fingers? if dynamite will not remove some gigantic rock, shall we undertake to heave it up with our shoulders?

Nevertheless, we need not wonder that political as well as more strictly social or economic questions are the talk of everybody, and that nearly every person thinks himself entitled to hold and give opinions on such. The problems and phenomena concerning

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Society or the State, however complicated or abstruse, are not the exclusive subject-matter for abstract science to feed upon, neither is their connection with practical life recondite or remote ; but, on the contrary, they are near and dear in most instances to the interests of everybody, high or low, well-educated or not. But neither should we be astonished to find the most well-meant liberal reforms generally miscarry, and produce the very opposite results to those their popular promoters anticipated. Indeed, it would be nearly as wise to submit questions in ultra-elliptic functions to the votes of constituencies or parliaments, as to expect at their hands the solution of the frequently much more intricate problems of social and political life.

As in philosophy, so in politics, circumstances of a kind apparently trifling, or which the superficial reasoner and observer is inclined to deny or overlook, assume in practice frequently paramount importance. Thus, the artillerist who would point his modern gun according to the simple parabolic law, heedless

of the resistance of the air, would see his shot fall wide of the aim. Nay, more than that, while both theory and common sense long proceeded on the assumption that water is without cohesion, the resistance of water to separation afforded a fulcrum to oars in the remotest of ages, and was the foundation of navigation. If science and “common sense” can so much err, what wonder then if the limited empiricism of statesmen and the wisdom of the middle classes have brought down on our age the most fatal deceptions which mankind, positively, ever suffered?

Not one liberal principle but is admirable in the abstract; yet not one liberal measure that has not worked terrible mischief in our time. The liberty of thought, for instance, who dare gainsay it? yet it has proved destructive of the principle of Religion, without which there is less cohesion among men than among a herd of swine. The liberty of settlement and circulation has given rise to the pestilence of large towns, in which men congregate and live together on terms worse than a pack of wolves.

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The liberty of industry has reduced four-fifths of the population to a state of serfdom more cruel than negro-slavery; while more than half of the remaining population is engaged in a perpetual struggle more savage than the intermittent warfare of cannibals. Free-trade among nations has ruined, first industrially, then financially, and finally politically, prosperous countries such as Turkey; while in England it has destroyed, not only agriculture, but all those sterling qualities which formerly characterized British industry and trade.

But the greatest deception our age has suffered, not so much in consequence of legislative enactments, as by virtue of social arrangements sanctioned by Law, has been the negative effect of discovery and invention upon the fate of mankind, which, through it, instead of being happier, has become vastly more miserable. A French economic writer of reputation—such as reputation goes among economists—has written a large volume\* in order to prove that the

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\* *Essai sur la Répartition des Richesses et sur la Tendance à une Moindre Inégalité des Conditions.*

so-called “social question,” that terrible question of our time, solves itself slowly but certainly. Now the most formidable and important social question, and which therefore is called so actually in all languages, *κατ εξοχην* or *tout court*, is simply that which concerns the division of wealth ; or rather the division of the produce of labour, both influenced by, and reacting on, the former. M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, the author of the book in question, affirms that fortunes and incomes go on gradually equalising themselves ; we, on the contrary, have shown in the following first paper that the chasm between rich and poor is for ever widening, by virtue of a law as unassailable as any axiom in mathematics. The reader will soon have occasion to see that our essay proceeds on very different lines from the works of Mr. Henry George, having been written even previous to the latter’s English, and without knowledge of his American, publications ; and a criticism of “Progress and Poverty” forms the subject-matter of the second paper in this volume, to which, by way of supplement,

is added a third, containing a brief exposition of the philosophy of Rent.

Parallel to the deception experienced by the modern world through the progress of industry, aided by discovery and invention, have come down upon this generation the fatal effects sprung from the spread of education.

While thoughtless or superficial writers pretend to find in education the remedy of all social evils, as a matter of fact, education has become the source of a vast amount of human suffering in modern times, under which those whose education is their only patrimony or source of income suffer most. No doubt, if all men became sufficiently intelligent to understand and be convinced that the best means to ensure everybody's happiness were to make everybody else happy, the millennium would have arrived; but, as it is, the spread of education, instead of benefiting mankind, has proved positively injurious to men, if we consider not humanity in the abstract, but the individuals who compose each passing generation. In our fourth paper this subject

has been examined by the light of some more or less new or neglected facts, the importance of one of which, relating to the effects of intellect on propagation, cannot be over-estimated. In a fifth, concluding, paper we have reflected, specially, on the social status of the modern literary man.

On a survey of the whole contents of this little volume, the impression will appear gloomy. But, no doubt, the Age of Soot has settled down upon the world; and as not even the Crown of England nor the Empire of India could induce an independent person to take up his abode in smoky, sunless London, so not even the love of Venus could engage a passionless man to entrust his progeny to this vile and mercenary modern world of ours, certainly the most unhappy phase in the history of mankind. At an epoch when the increased sensibility of men goes hand in hand with increased selfishness, fired by the ever increasing value of wealth, by which more enjoyment than ever can be procured, while without it more privations than ever must be endured,—

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what wonder if self-immolation has become more frequent than criminal execution, while the car of Juggernaut would be daily welcomed by thousands for ever hovering, wavering, on the brink of suicide? Nor is it strange that the Nihilist—Samson-like—should wish to shake the edifice of Society, and to be buried among its ruins.

The reasons why these papers, some of which were written years ago, have not been before, or why they are now, published, it would be needless, for the present, to state. Possibly, the occasion may arise yet, when the author may think it befitting to publish some autobiographical data concerning his scientific, literary, and political labours, both in England and in his native country.

A. K.



## I.

### THE DILEMMA OF LABOUR.

REAT improvements have been effected in this century in all kinds of implements, by which one man nowadays may do more quickly the same work which it formerly required many to accomplish ; yet we do not actually find less persons, men, women, or children, engaged in continual bodily labour than before. Human society necessitates mechanical drudgery ; but, *prima facie*, the result of the introduction of labour-saving engines ought to have been to diminish the number of the “hewers of wood and drawers of water,” or to abridge their working-time. As a matter of fact, however, more persons, both absolutely and proportionately, work nowadays for as great, if not a greater, number of hours than ever did before. The output of human labour, also, through the prodigious effects of machinery, has vastly increased ; yet we do not find the

working classes to have always benefited by the same. The character of labour may have changed to a large extent,—operatives working now frequently with their hands and fingers, where formerly they worked with their limbs or bodies. In other words, the “factory hand” has ceased, mostly, to act as an engine of brute force or as a beast of burden. Yet while able-bodied men—who occasionally find it impossible to make any livelihood at all—frequently subsist on wages that will just keep body and soul together, neither women nor children can, generally, achieve by their labour an independent maintenance ; and, as a rule, to support a family of operatives, not only the fathers of such, but mothers and children also, must contribute to the *wages fund* or income of the family,—and that in a much greater number of instances than was the case in former times.

The explanation of these startling facts, which have puzzled many, but have remained hitherto unaccounted for, has to be sought for, *in the first place*, in the effects of luxury. A vast literature has accumulated on the subject of luxury, but its whole philosophy lies in a

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nutshell. Were but strictly indispensable things produced, undoubtedly, and that notwithstanding the institution of property, no misery or want need exist in this world ; nor would toil and overwork burden the greater portion of mankind. The quantity of plain, wholesome nutriment required for man's sustenance is very moderate ; and from their perishable nature, most food-provisions are not liable to storage or accumulation through avarice or greed. The simple clothing requisite for man's protection in any climate, is likewise of small amount ; and although most clothing material is or can be made durable, yet few would care to possess much wearing apparel if there were no ornament or variety about it. Again, the extent of space or house-room, with the quantity of furniture, useful for wholesome breathing and comfortable shelter, is equally limited ; and simple furniture, like houses, requiring rarely to be renewed, and both being cumbrous, none would care to possess in that kind more than they could actually utilize. The natural wants of man being thus few and circumscribed, and the means for satisfying the same ample and

abundant, even without the aid of modern machinery,—want and overwork, so far, need never have existed on earth.

But as soon as Luxury steps in, the aspect of the whole world changes. To confine our view merely to the above-mentioned items—and luxury gives rise to countless artificial wants,—even the food that a luxurious person is wont to consume exceeds, if not in quantity, yet in variety, that of man in the state of nature; and being gathered and fetched from all parts of the earth, entails a vast amount of human labour. One luxurious dress that a lady will wear, sometimes, for one evening only, may keep dozens of other women and men at work for weeks, or even for months; and there is virtually no limit, not even in the days of the year, to the number of such dresses that women will desire, and if they can will get to possess;—and a similar remark, in past periods, applied also to men, when they also indulged in finery. Of the number of palaces that a family will wish for, if only to visit once in their lifetime, neither is there any positive limit; while of the quantity of furniture that people now actually do store up,

when ordinary houses and apartments are turned into show-rooms of knick-knacks and gew-gaws,—that their proprietor scarcely ever sets eyes upon, but which yet he will constantly go on adding to,—there is absolutely no end.

Thus, while the greed of luxury, by the extremes to which it may be carried, goes ever on exacting as much work as human labour, aided by machinery, can be forced to yield, this same craving, being never satisfied with what it has, and feeding to some extent even upon contrast, forcibly extracts for the benefit of the rich as much of the labourer's produce as the established laws of property and custom will permit. Nations having a super-abundant national supply of all the necessaries of life will thus yet impose upon their poor endless work, while reducing them to a minimum of subsistence; in order that the rich may obtain, either from home labour or through exchange from abroad, endless articles of luxury. Countries, on the other hand, which somehow or other do not furnish all the necessaries that their populations require, will all the more keep their poor

to hard labour, in order to produce artificial things, both for home and foreign consumption, and to obtain by exchange both luxuries and necessaries from abroad, of which latter, in such case, the labourer *à fortiori* will receive the merest pittance.

It has frequently been asserted that the poor live by the luxury of the rich ; and the assertion, in some sense, is certainly true, as we shall presently show ; nevertheless, from an instinctive feeling, and that not merely of envy, the poor have always felt an aversion for luxury, which, in fact, is *one* of their arch-foes. But, if luxury be an object of hatred to the poor, avarice, its antagonist, has ever been despised by all men ; yet avarice, or money-greed, also, though contrary to the interests of all classes, reacts in an especially baleful manner again on the labouring poor. For when the rich are spending, the work of the poor will at all events be kept going, upon whatever unfair terms and hard conditions ; if, on the contrary, the rich are miserly or stingy and saving, their stint will be even more hurtful than their luxury to the poor.

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In the first place, if the wealthy require their income to be served to them mostly in money, and that is what constitutes avarice or a saving disposition, it is evident *prima facie* that there will be less employment for the poor, than if such income were accepted in kind ; consequently, while a portion of the labouring class, possibly, will be altogether starved out of existence, the remainder, at all events, through their own competition, will hardly be better off. But, in the next place, *primitive* avarice leads also to hoarding, or to the withdrawal of money from circulation ; as a natural sequel to which, industry and enterprise flag, and the condition of the poor becomes still more reduced. Such, in fact, is the state of most Oriental countries at the present day ; where, by the side of the greatest natural resources, indigence and sloth hover on the land. Among Western nations, on the contrary, at least in modern times, avarice leads no more to hoarding ; in lieu of which saving is practised preparatory to *investment*, the effects of which on the poor are totally different.

In one respect “hoarding” and investment

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have the same result; in so far, namely, as both frequently lead to money-lending, which in Oriental countries is practised in conjunction with hoarding, and in the West is one of the forms of investment. Now, if a person, after having satisfied all his accustomed wants, employ his surplus income, say £100, in the purchase of a vase or any other article of luxury, which he may either order or buy ready made, he thereby appropriates a certain quantity of human labour, but he in consequence neither increases his income nor his future command of work. If, on the contrary, the same sum, instead of being spent or simply hoarded, be employed in lending or in other investment, its possessor, through the tribute he exacts in the shape of interest, acquires a continually ascending income, and thereby may command a continually increasing quantity of human labour in succeeding years.

Here, however, the effects of ancient and modern, or Western and Oriental, money-lending become divergent. In the East, as in former centuries also in Europe, and in some parts of it still now, money is principally borrowed by or advanced to embarrassed persons, and that

on highly usurious terms. By consequence, the borrowing class becomes constantly more impoverished, while the usurers, by the working of compound interest, under a high rate of discount, first amass and even monopolise all the moneys of the land, but soon are able to appropriate also most other valuables, such as jewellery, and finally even houses and estates. In modern countries, on the other hand, money is mainly advanced for commercial and industrial purposes, or the creation of new wealth, to the mutual advantage of lenders and borrowers, and of all kinds of enterprise ; but yet, this modern system of credit, though it gives them abundant employment, bears again very hard upon the working poor, as will soon appear.

In former times money passed effectually from the hand of the lender to that of the borrower. Nowadays the greater portion of credit operations consists in the purchase of goods on credit, *i.e.*, payable after a certain lapse of time ; but even then, debts are not liquidated in effective money. Thus, while formerly merchants and others who wished to trade beyond their own capital, or persons without any capital at all, had to apply first to

the money-lender before they could purchase any goods, the money-lender or banker is now circumvented. In the end, it is true, the banker is still the person to whom, not the purchaser, but the seller of goods upon credit may have to apply, if not for money, yet for fresh credit ; and the banker, therefore, still regulates, after all, the rate of discount. But it stands to reason, and is proved by experience, that interest ranges much lower under these circumstances than it otherwise would. This is shown particularly in commercial and industrial crises, where the securities accepted and given by traders on credit are effectively taken to the bankers', to whom, according to previous ancient practice, they ought originally to have been presented. The rate of discount on these occasions suddenly and considerably rises. Thus, the monopoly of money has been, at least under ordinary circumstances, effectually broken up ; but it has to be also considered that while the tribute exacted by money lenders has been apparently reduced, other capital than money—viz., goods—being employed in credit operations exacts likewise tribute from borrowers in the shape of interest. And further, money-

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lenders by profession, or bankers, levy tribute not only, nowadays, on their capital, but also on their guarantee or signature ; and in consequence the proceeds of the trade of money-lending are still exorbitant, as shown by the dividends of well-managed Joint Stock Banks.

Savings in the shape of investment, however, are not only represented by loans, but also by enterprises of all kinds which absorb capital, as it is frequently called, but, in fact, procreate such. Money changes hands ; but in so doing houses, railways, and factories are made to arise by its agency. Now the money-capital embarked in these properties requires its annual tribute, not only for interest, but also for profits or dividends. Enterprises which, under the name of Joint Stock or Limited Companies, have taken such prodigious development, in conjunction with the loans advanced to such, and the deposits entrusted to bankers and bill-discounters, constitute now a main portion both of individual as of national wealth, in comparison to which the stock-in-trade of merchants and the property of landowners or agriculturists have lost much of their former importance or significance. As a matter of fact, also, *the*

*addition* to these various, be it ancient or modern, forms of property in the shape of fresh *investments*, goes on annually increasing; and the tribute which capital thus exacts for interest or dividend follows the ascending scale of compound interest.

Now, *all these tributes, nominally consisting in money, are effectually levied in the shape of labour.*

To resume, bankers and banks have a virtual monopoly of all the moneys of the land,—for their own capital is scarcely inferior to all the circulating specie; and their annual returns, as we have mentioned, represent an almost usurious rate of interest.

Commercial capital as well as industrial, in the shape of interest and profits or dividends, obtains, it may be fairly presumed, for traders an equal remuneration to that enjoyed by the moneyed interest; and considering the amount of both fixed and circulating capital represented by the stock-in-trade, the plant and cash engaged by merchants and manufacturers in their several trades, the tribute which it requires is enormous.

Again, other capitalists, such as depositors

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at banks, virtually subsidize trade, although lending their moneys to bankers. Consequently they participate in the gross profits of trade, or require a retribution separate from its net profits. Investors who similarly loan their capital to industrial enterprises without actually embarking in the same, have to be added to this list of pensioners or *rentiers*; while others, who effectively engage their moneys as co-proprietors in industrial undertakings, and participate in their risks if not in their management, form, as it were, a separate or peculiar class of traders, and expect the remuneration of their capital, so to speak, as sleeping partners. The new forms of industry which have sprung up by this means, in the form of railways and similar public works owned by private persons, it were needless to insist upon; but the tribute due to these new classes of capitalists is perhaps the most important.

Houses and other tenements, the number of which necessarily increases; building-plots, the value and importance of which is simultaneously growing; agricultural lands, stock and implements, as well as improvements of the soil, that likewise represent constantly augmenting

capital; finally, mines newly opened; all these more ancient classes of property or *estate*, notwithstanding occasional or temporary fluctuations, require a yearly advancing tribute or income, under the name, be it of profits, rents, or other.

Now, what is it that produces the aggregate of these tributes or incomes?—evidently Work, and nothing else.

What need, therefore, seeing the yearly accumulation of income-bearing wealth, to be astonished at the unceasing and undiminishing toil of the labouring poor?

But, if the work of the poor be evidently on the increase, what is the retribution of their toil,—or to what extent does their poverty participate, if not in the *accumulated* wealth, but, at least, in the fresh annual produce of labour?

\* To this question we are able to give a peremptory and categorical answer, by means of a law which we have been so fortunate as to discover, and which, in regard to its character and importance, we venture to compare—we hope without presumption—with the law of gravitation. Indeed, it actually

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indicates the ratio in which the national produce *gravitates to*, or spontaneously subdivides itself among, the two great sections of society, *propriétaires* and *prolétaires*, or the proprietary and working-classes.

To elucidate this law, let us examine what happens with the wages received by the working classes throughout the year. As a matter of fact, the working classes, at the end of the year, do not find themselves the richer in money for all the wages they may have received throughout its duration. The additions they may have made, as a class, to their money savings\* are, on the whole, insignificant if compared to the sum total of wages. The money that labourers may have received they have simply lived upon ; that is, spent on articles of consumption or to supply wear and tear. Consequently the whole, or very nearly the whole, cash supplied by wages has returned from the working to the proprietary classes, who were the original dispensers of the same.

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\* Or even to their chattels, and supposing also that such accumulation in some households be not compensated for by the impoverishment of others.

Among wages nominally received by workmen from their employers we must establish, however, a distinction. Part of those wages, namely, is virtually paid by the working-classes to each other, or by one member of the same to another; although, apparently, it is the employer who pays down the money. For instance, the merchant-clothier will disburse the working-tailor's wages, while the latter may be engaged in fabricating a coat that will, ultimately, be bought by another journeyman, say hatter, or, possibly, himself, tailor. In the price paid down by this purchaser, the clothier will recuperate whatever wages he may have advanced for the making of the coat, and the wages received by the one operative are, hence, derived from the pockets of another operative. It is evident, that such wages, supplied by one workman to another, cannot enrich their class with money.

Another, the remaining, portion of their wages is effectively supplied to the working-class through their employers, or by the rich proprietary classes, for work the produce of which is appropriated by the latter. But the

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moneys so received by the working poor, and which constitute their *real cash income* as a class, we have already shown, are spent by them again, and thus return to the rich ; spent, that is to say, in the appropriation of goods, the work contained in which the poor themselves have furnished, but whose selling-price—for material and work combined, commercial profits, and so forth—is necessarily superior to the price of the mere labour embodied in the same.

In other words, the poor return to the rich in the purchase of goods the money they receive from the latter in the shape of wages ; and at the end of the year they are no richer in money than they were at the beginning. The rich, on the other hand, who spend money in wages for the production of the goods they appropriate, receive back the identical sum on selling to the poor the goods these latter appropriate. Consequently the rich also, so far, are no gainers in money. But what the rich actually do gain is the value of the labour supplied to them by the poor ; while the gains of the poor consist in the value of the produce supplied to them by the

rich, after deducting the price of their own labour embodied in the same.

Virtually, therefore, rich and poor exchange continually labour for produce *minus* the labour contained in the latter. And, as in every barter the money value of the things exchanged is *ipso facto* equivalent, the income of the rich as a class, so far, is the same as that of the working-classes; and, expressed in money, it is in both instances equivalent to the totality of wages received by the poor for work supplied to the rich.

From this apparent or *money* equality, we must not, however, draw the conclusion that a real equivalence *in kind* subsists.\*

Let us take, for instance, any sort of goods or merchandize, the market-price of which

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\* The rich are accustomed to call *income* what they get for nothing or simply in exchange for services; and, therefore, deduct the value of whatever *matter* or raw material they have supplied, in counting up their income. On the other hand, in computing the latter, we must count, if not the value of the labour above-mentioned, that of all matter newly appropriated, as of the work of all natural forces and agencies, and equally the price of the services performed, as of the tributes (interest, profit, etc.,) levied, by the rich.

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be, say, 10s. per unit, but in whose selling price only 1s. be represented by the wages of labour. To take *one* such unit out of the market, the rich as a class have to expend only 1s., the remaining 9s. returning to members of their own class. The poor, on the contrary, to appropriate *one* such unit have to part, as a class, with 9s. Consequently, for the same expenditure, say of 9s., as a class, the rich may become possessed of nine units of merchandize, while the poor can only acquire one unit.

We thus arrive at this result, which is in the nature of a fundamental Social Law, that *the aggregate annual produce subdivides itself spontaneously between poor and rich in the same proportion as, in the average price of produce of all kinds, the item of wages holds to all the remaining items united*; and this law is, evidently, independent of all possible market fluctuations affecting prices or wages.

This primary and fundamental law, which we have above deduced from complicated reasoning, may be even shown to be an unassailable axiom. Indeed, *in every kind of produce, a portion*

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*virtually belongs to the labouring class equivalent to the fraction which in its price is represented by wages,—a self-evident truth which in other words expresses, but the same thing as the above-mentioned law.\**

In order to ascertain more precisely how the division of produce between rich and poor, or proprietors and labourers, is practically effected, the following considerations should, however, not be neglected.

A notable portion of their wages is spent by the poor in house-rent, which naturally goes in deduction of their capacity for appropriating produce. The wages which they receive as operatives in the building trade are far from covering this expenditure ; they, consequently, not only do not acquire any portion of the tenements they construct, but, through rent,

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\* To bring home the truth of the above to even the most refractory mind, let us take an example. Suppose that in the price of a loaf of bread, valued at  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ , the labour of the country and town operatives, whose work has contributed to the production of the loaf, is represented in the aggregate by one farthing. For the production of ten such loaves these working men will have received ten farthings, or  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ , for which they may evidently appropriate one loaf, *i.e.*, one out of ten.

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have to diminish their share in the acquisition of other produce, otherwise due to them.

The wages of operatives for building and working railways, canals, and other public works, steamers, and the like, are again disbursed by them—if not exceeded—in the fares, etc., which they pay for the use of such. The rich, therefore, as a class, can appropriate not only, as shown above, houses new and old, but all railways, etc., and use them virtually for nothing.

Taxes, rates, etc., when not directly paid by the poor, are added on to the price of produce, and so forth; and, consequently, they always diminish the above ratio or the share of the poor in the totality of produce. The receipts of the poor from the public treasury, as private soldiers, dockyard operatives, etc., or as indigents, are far from compensating, and still less outweighing, the above losses.

The poor eat as much if not more bread than the rich *per head*; and their numbers are far greater. Even on taking into consideration the lesser quality and price of the bread consumed by the poor, their wages as bakers, millers, etc., certainly bear not the same pro-

portion to the selling price of bread, in which their consumption stands to its total production. This item of expenditure involves by consequence a less appropriation of other produce.

A similar remark applies also to drinks, of which the working classes consume not the same, but even a greater quantity per head than the rich. Hence, notwithstanding the slightly compensating influence of the superior quality of the drinks of the rich, on this score also the poor see their share in other produce considerably reduced.

If such be the status of the poor, let us investigate now a little more closely also that of the rich.

All, or almost all, new wealth, such as is capable of yielding an annual return, income, profit, or rent, falls to the share of the rich, who already are possessors of all similar pre-existing wealth. Notably, all houses, new and old, are the property of the rich, who inhabit the best of them, while the housing of the poor is too notorious to need description.

The superior consumption, be it per head or in the aggregate, by the poor of bread and drinks permits to the rich the appropriation

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of almost all superior foods, drinks, and the like.

As a matter of fact, the rich alone are well-dressed, possess adequate, even elegant, furniture, and all valuable articles of luxury.

The means by which the rich attain to such results, besides those just specified in detail, consist in the main in the various tributes which they levy, enumerated in the preceding pages. Further, in their being creditors or highly-remunerated servants of the State, in which capacity they receive more from the State than they disburse for taxation \* ; which,

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\* One species of "investments" is represented by Public Debts, on the bearings of which a whole literature exists ; the philosophy of the subject, however, is very simple.

When any sudden emergency or unusual necessity for expenditure arises in the State, the poor, being already over-taxed and overburdened, cannot furnish the money. The rich, on the other hand, can very well afford it ; but instead of paying the required sum in the shape of taxes, they furnish it, by preference, in the form of interest-bearing advances to the State. Thus part of the savings of the rich, instead of being invested in remunerative work, is handed over to the Government for outlay in various, generally unproductive, ways. Yet for their advances, howsoever spent, the rich expect as much, and frequently as great, a return as for

whenever they can, they, moreover, shift on to the poor. Finally, at least in wealthier countries, the rich are not only creditors of their own, but likewise of foreign nations. These,

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other "investments"; which is furnished by new taxation, principally derived from the poor. The sums advanced by the public creditor may have been employed exclusively for taking out of the market consumable articles, or for ordering merchandize of such kind; but, in regard to the labouring poor, the expenditure produces worse results than if it had been employed in the erection of remunerative private works.

In order to pay the new taxes, the poor must either stint themselves, diminish their share in the annual produce, or, virtually, give labour for nothing. The rich, on the contrary, have found in Public Debts the means of avoiding taxation altogether.

An examination of the English Budget, for example, shows that the amount of taxation nominally incident on the wealthy is quite covered by their share—nearly the whole—of the dividends of the National Debt; and, all things considered, the statements in the text regarding the financial relations of the rich classes to the State cannot be charged with exaggeration.

The advantages of Public Debt to the wealthy, governing classes are so palpable that in many States public loans are regularly resorted to, even in ordinary times, to cover deficits. Such nations, mostly, are not only indebted to their own rich, but pay also tribute to those of foreign nations through exterior or foreign loans,—a subject not necessary here to analyse.

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consequently, if *really* solvent, supply such wealthier nations for the benefit of their rich classes with produce, *gratis*, received by them as a tribute from the former for money or produce previously borrowed.

The above law, subject to the observations just made, will now help us to answer the question, so much discussed at present, whether Progress and Poverty are really—and if so, in what sense—linked together.

One outcome of industrial progress admitted on all hands is, notwithstanding the rise in wages, a diminution of the fraction for which human labour—or wages—enters in the market-price of goods.\* An economist of repute, the

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\* This diminution is not a matter of accident, nor is it difficult to explain.

The more natural forces and mechanical contrivances are made to perform and displace the work of man, the greater, of necessity, must become the portion in market prices allotted to those, and the smaller that of human labour. Whatever the fluctuations in the market-rates, be it of labour or of merchandize, the fraction representing wages in selling prices will clearly tend to diminish with the diminution of human labour embodied in goods; and the remuneration virtually claimed for natural forces and mechanical agencies will always go to enhance the fraction reserved in prices to the possessors or monopolizers of such.

author of the French volume on the Division of Wealth, mentioned in the Introduction,—and who is not disposed to overstate the case in favour of the working-class,—assumes that while formerly that fraction was represented by 60 per cent. it is now only 40 per cent. But, whatever the actual diminution may be, it is evident from our law that, so far, the share of the poor in the division of produce or wealth is diminished in the same proportion.

A second and even more patent or obvious result of industrial progress is the increase of produce not only in the aggregate but *per head* of population. By such means the well-being of the poor, reduced as we have just stated, may be brought up again to the same or even a superior *absolute* level. But as regards the *relative* status of poor and rich, this result of progressive industry must likewise widen the chasm between the two classes, as we shall presently show.

The numbers of the rich and poor classes, in the most advanced European countries, bear to each other, roughly speaking, the proportion of one to four. If, for every group of five persons, composed of one rich and four

poor men, there were, say, twenty units of average produce *formerly* to be divided ; and if, according to the above assumption, the item of wages in prices represented 60 per cent., eight such units fell to the share of every rich person, while twelve units had to be divided among four poor men, whose share consequently was three units each. In this case the portion of the rich was two and two-third times as great as that of the poor, while the difference between their respective shares amounted to five units.

If, now, according to the above author, 40 per cent. only represent wages in price, out of every twenty units eight would fall to the four poor and twelve go to the one rich in each group of five people. Hence, for every twelve units, forming the portion of *one* rich, only two units would form the share of *one* poor. In other words, the rich would be six times better off than the poor ; and the difference between their respective shares amount to ten units per head.

In order to restore the poor to their former status or absolute level, production per head must increase by *one half*, making the share of

*one* poor again equal to three units of produce, while that of *one* rich would become equal to eighteen units. The rich, therefore, would again be six times better off ; but the difference in their favour would now amount to fifteen units. If production actually have increased more than *one half*, the proportion between the shares of the rich and poor would still remain equal to six ; but the difference of their shares would have become yet greater. In fact, it is easy to see that this difference increases proportionately to the increase of production ; and it is consequently clear that, both on account of the diminution of the ratio for which wages enter into prices as on the score of increased production; *the relative status of rich and poor differs the more the greater the progress of industry.*

Whether, as the rich grow richer, the poor get poorer, not only as compared to their rich neighbours, but to their own previous condition, is a question which, regarding past and present circumstances, is practically almost devoid of interest. While statistics show that in perhaps the wealthiest and certainly the most luxurious city in Europe—that

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is, in Paris—55 per cent. of interments have to be performed *gratis*, on account of the indigence of the dead or their families, at the present day; it were no consolation to know that, formerly, poverty was still greater, supposing even such were the fact. But what we have proved at all events is the fact that—whether or not in the absolute sense—the relative condition of the poor, compared to that of the rich, has *of necessity* become worse, as regards material well-being.

Two more considerations need to be added. In the first place, whatever improvement may have taken place, absolutely, in the material condition of the working classes, we must not forget that, as before mentioned, not only fathers and adults, but mothers and children also, must work for wages—and that far from home—to a greater extent now than was the case in former times. And, in the second place, the proportion of the working-classes to the entire population has, no doubt, considerably increased in modern times; for while formerly every journeyman almost, in due course of time, became master, and thereby attained to independence or competency,

nowadays the town-operative, like the agricultural labourer, is practically chained down to his condition, together with his progeny, by a rule as hard and fast as those of caste almost.

The statistics of the dead at Paris, already quoted from, indicate near 55 per cent. of indigents, some 28 per cent. of poor just a little better off, 14 per cent. well-to-do, and scarcely more than 3 per cent. of rich people, among its habitants ; and although, from the greater mortality among the poor, these figures apply more correctly to the dead than to the living inhabitants, yet statistics directly concerning the latter show similar proportions. Now, what with the antiquity of material civilization in France, as in all Western countries, it seems almost preposterous or nearly incredible that such a state of things should prevail. Whatever may have been the case in former times, surely it cannot be alleged regarding our own that population is too dense ; for with the aid of modern machinery every man and child almost can produce more than is necessary for his sustenance, and the annual aggregate produce of the great proportion of people

addicted to labour should be more than sufficient to spread prosperity among all classes. But as long as all raw material in its primary state, as well as all natural forces and mechanical agencies, are the property of a limited number, it seems that Man also must be their starving slave ; and while the produce of labour accumulates in their hands, the rich alone are enabled to enjoy life.

## II.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF "PROGRESS AND  
POVERTY."

**M**R. HENRY GEORGE, in "Progress and Poverty," has undertaken to explain, and at the same time to indicate a remedy for, the modern prevalence of poverty all industrial progress notwithstanding. Scarcely in any other book written since Adam Smith's "Inquiry," on economic subjects, has there been shown so much acumen; and in none, certainly, so much eloquence, which is only too exuberant. Nevertheless, the precision of thought so rarely encountered among political or economic writers, and which pervades the greater part of this book, in many places is deficient; as it is wanting in a few also in Smith's admirable "Inquiry."

The cause of all social evil the author finds in Rent, which he, therefore, would practically abolish. According to him, every man has a

right to the produce of his labour, and no man to more land than he can cultivate ; and to so much all men have an equal right. Here we have to raise already a first objection. If, through improved modes of cultivation, or from a restricted territory, or both circumstances combined, there is less land than the inhabitants might cultivate, what becomes of this right ? But this is only a theoretical objection, and which the author might allege to have answered by implication. The distribution of land being at present unjust, according to the above principles of social equity, he says, *the State*, as the original proprietor of all land, has a right and ought to resume the same.

That the State, without whose protection no property could or would exist, may do so is true, possibly, in the abstract. But Mr. George even denies that the State should give the landed proprietors any compensation. He reasons, " True, many proprietors of land have *bought* the same. But then the title of the sellers was invalid, and consequently, according to Common Law even, the new title need not be regarded ;" Mr. George not noticing prescrip-

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tions which the law invoked by the author does acknowledge.

If it be argued that land has become valuable through labour, in clearing estates and so forth, or through past improvements, he alleges that this item is comparatively so small as to merge itself in the much greater value of the soil in its natural state ; and, further, that such hitherto accumulated artificial value has accrued in the course of ages, and not through the labour of the present proprietors.

The right to other property but land the author would allow, because it is the produce of labour ; but yet he fails to notice that it is in most cases also the produce of *other* men's labour. Land, according to him, is productive independent of man's exertions, and this natural productiveness furnishes the rent. But cattle is equally, or in similar manner, naturally productive ; yet he does *not* disallow property in cattle, although the calf born of a cow, like the fruit which falls from a tree, is Nature's bounty. Not more, however, than a surface deposit of gold ; nay, the latter is even far more a direct natural produce than a wheat crop is nowadays. Not only gold deposited on

the surface, but, in fact, every other species of mining product, is in the first instance Nature's production, which to utilize practically will require on the average perhaps a less amount of labour than the sowing and gathering of the fruits of the earth. Yet, although in *one* place Mr. George might seem to assimilate gold placers to land in regard to his principle of appropriation, he does *not* advocate the abolition of the rental derived from mines,—perhaps because he calls such rental profits. If, however, a man should never be allowed to appropriate more of the soil than he can work by his own hands, the principle should apply whether he cultivates wheat or extracts coal.

But the self-contradictions of Mr. George, in respect of the principle which is the whole foundation of his policy, are almost too numerous to be all noticed. Thus he traces the origin of interest on “capital” in any form, and not of money merely, to a fact which to the natural reasoning might justify rent, but according to him legitimates interest. He says, after Aristotle: It would be unfair to demand the loan of a calf on condition of restoring another calf after a time, when the former might have become a

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bull; or, for the matter of that, if a heifer, might have produced another calf. And as money, or a piece of cloth as well, might be exchanged for a calf, the same consideration applies also, according to Mr. George, to "capital" at large. But then we may ask with Shakespeare's Antonio: Does money or cloth breed? More than that, if the origin of interest be in the productive or reproductive powers of Nature, as exemplified in cattle or in land, why should interest be legitimate for the loan of things unproductive, and not of actually reproductive land? That such interest is called rent certainly cannot render it illegitimate. The incongruousness of Mr. George's position becomes, if possible, still more striking if we reflect that among rent he includes also ground-rents. Now, building-ground is not productive like agricultural land, but must be rather assimilated, on the contrary, to the stones found in the soil, which, formed into a house, will yield house-rent,—which he admits as legitimate. But why one person should fitly draw the house-rents of ten houses and not also the landlord their ground-rents is incomprehensible. The contradiction becomes, however, still more

apparent by considering that on the Continent the separation of house from ground-rent does not obtain.

It might be asked, if land is to be fairly apportioned according to every man's capacity for labour, who is to appropriate the fertile Nile land, and who the steppes bordering on the Desert? Mr. George, however, might answer that his scheme is not for redistribution of land, but the abolition of rent. Rent, on principle, he would abolish ; but, practically, he proposes to confiscate it through taxation. Every tax on produce, says Mr. George, is paid ultimately by the consumer ; but a tax on rent would have to be borne by the proprietor or landlord. The market price of agricultural produce cannot be raised on account of foreign competition,—such is his reasoning. The same argument, however, would apply to almost any other goods directly proposed to be taxed. But, if the tax in no instance could really be shifted on to the consumer, it might yet, in the case of rent, be wrung out of the farmer, or from the agricultural labourer even, by still reducing his standard of living ; and yet Mr. George supposes that a tax on rent must raise

the latter. But a principal point Mr. George omits to develop altogether. How much or what fraction of rent is to be taken from the landlords? Let us suppose it were *the whole*, or that the landlords were reduced to the state of mere salaried tax-gatherers.

In 1875, the rent of land in the United Kingdom was under 67 millions, the income from other property 504 millions, of which above 310 millions have been estimated to represent interest on capital other than land, but including farmers' earnings (who are capitalists) and income from mines (which we have seen must be included, according to Mr. George's theory, among "capital," not land). Now, what is the whole income from rent compared to the income derived without exertion from other wealth called by some, exclusively, *capital*? Why, scarcely more than *one-fifth*. Yet we have to consider that the income from rent is properly assessed, while there is reason to believe that the income derived from "capital" is considerably higher than what the income-tax tables indicate; and we have to reflect also that, besides the 310 millions set apart as *interest*

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on "capital," there are some 140 millions liberally allotted by way of *wages* to the "capitalist" and professional classes, according to the above computation.

Nevertheless, it is only rent that Mr. George would simply abolish ; if, for practical reasons, he did not find it more advisable to appropriate it to the State.

The profits of other property but land Mr. George generally calls interest, assimilating it thus to money, and including all superior profit among personal wages. Now, as the profits of trade at present are much larger in every way than those of agriculture, they therefore constitute social injustice even more glaring than rent. If rent is to be abolished, or the landlord keep only so much of his estate as he can cultivate or as will give him a living, "capitalists" must be deprived of their capital and reduced to the same standard. Whatever the benefit of working land or other capital, he who works it should have the whole advantage, and no one, in proportion to the community, an unfair advantage. Consequently, it should be equally impossible to make an income by

lending other capital as by lending land, and interest on capital should be abolished altogether. If it be again asserted that "capital" implies labour, there is labour embodied in land, and certainly more of such than there is in cattle, for instance. But we have already noticed that, whether with reference to land or any other form of property or capital, so-called "accumulated labour" gathers, generally, in hands that have *not* furnished it in the first instance. That land may, by dint of labour, manuring, and so forth, produce out of one grain ten grains of wheat amounts, no doubt, to a natural difference, but not to an economic distinction in regard to other property.

If, on the contrary, those who possess wealth other than land may, by hiring it out, require tribute called interest, why not the proprietors of the soil? Does it make any difference if we call the latter *land*, and other riches, when we derive from them an income, *capital*? Or does it make any difference that in the first case we call the income rent, and in the other interest? Or is the share of land, required as rent, so much more exorbitant than that of capital for interest?

Agriculture is but a species of industry, and the landlord but a shareholder, or rather bond-holder, in an industrial enterprise. In that capacity landlords appropriate part of the “bounty of Nature;” but only in similar manner as manufacturers (whether actually such or simply shareholders in industrial establishments) appropriate the margin of production after all other claims have been satisfied. Manufacturers (or share and bond-holders) do so in their capacity of “capitalists,” although in their case that margin is due to the exertions of men,—that is, their labourers,—and not a mere gift of Nature. But throughout the analogy maintains itself. For at the present time the products of industry are due in a great measure to the natural forces evolved by coal, steam, electricity, and the like ; just as, on the other hand, labour enters now considerably in agricultural productions, whatever may have been the case in primitive times. Why, then, should “capitalists” benefit both by the work of their own operatives and of natural forces,—and not landlords by that of labourers and of similar or dissimilar natural forces? If really the agricultural labourer should have the benefit of both in

the latter case, why not the town operative in the former? If, on the other hand, under present circumstances landlords require rent even in bad times, not of labourers, but of capitalists called farmers; does it seem so much more horrible than that manufacturers should in bad times turn their operatives, who previously enriched them, adrift, leaving them to starve?

The revenue from capital in the shape of land, through rent, in England represents, moreover, in money a very small percentage; and the returns of farmers to the income-tax are as great as those furnished by landlords.

If the number of persons be taken into consideration who enjoy the aggregate income derived from rent on the one hand, and that of "capital" on the other, or if the distribution of both among their proprietors be noticed; it is found that the division both of property and of income among landlords and "capitalists" is not more anomalous in one case than in the other.

It is argued sometimes by those who sympathize with schemes analogous to those of Mr. George, that in rent, in fact, is the

origin of all illegitimate property; as, but for rent, the exchangeable value of produce would be simply that of the labour embodied in the same, while the ingredient derived from the soil—the latter being no man's property—would in itself represent nothing or have no value whatever. But those who advance such arguments simply forget that, whether embodying or not in its price the item of rent or other dues to soil, if the produce of labour be appropriated by fraud, violence, or unjust laws to those whose labour has not originated the produce, the illegitimacy of the property remains absolutely the same. On the other hand, the opponents of rent, who harp on the theme that the land *furnishes* all riches,—although virtually they attribute their *origin* to labour,—likewise forget that it is certainly not the landlords who retain all those riches. Virtually, in capital of whatever kind, a portion of the soil has been embodied, and he who appropriates much capital, in fact becomes possessed also of a considerable portion of the original soil. If, to take a striking example, the possession of much land by one person, which practically means

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the right to appropriate part of its produce, be unjust in the case of landlords, why should the direct accumulation of such produce in the hands of corn dealers, for instance, be deemed just? For how have those merchants come to possess the wheat, *e.g.*, they detain? Certainly they have not sowed nor gathered the crop; nor have they given in exchange the produce of their own labour. And even if the money they have paid for the wheat have been *made* by themselves, surely the retribution of their services to society must be deemed exorbitant and unfair if in the course even of a whole lifetime they have gathered a fortune, be it represented by money or temporarily by wheat. For if it be unjust to appropriate an unfair extent of soil with a view of appropriating its produce, it must seem unfair also to monopolize annually, through whatsoever occupation, more produce than what a man's own labour, directly applied to production, might turn out in the year.

We thus see the advocates of the abolition of rent entangled in a web of contradictions,—at least those who, like Mr. George or Mr.

Bright, are the adversaries of landlords, without being those of capitalists at large. Manufacturers, notably, whose labour—even if they be not in fact simple shareholders—has produced neither the plant of the establishment nor the fabrics which it turns out,—and who, as we have shown, appropriate, not the surplus of labour only, but also the produce of natural forces, just like landlords,—ought to be the allies rather than the enemies of the latter,—“sailing with them,” as the saying is, “in the same boat.”

If, on the other hand, “fair rent,” fixed by law, be a necessity of the times, then why not also “fair wages” also, prescribed by the State? If property be scared when vulgarly called “capital,” why not under the ancient name of “land”? If freedom, and notably freedom of contract, is to reign supreme, why not in the hire of land as well as in the hire of labour? If in agriculture labourers and even farmers may smart under the *sic vos non vobis*, does the same complaint not apply in the same degree to artizans,—and, in fact, to all workers, including those of the brain?

## III.

## BRIEF PHILOSOPHY OF RENT.

SUPPOSE a territory planted with some species of trees, the natural produce of which may furnish, when worked up, all the materials necessary for man's subsistence,—a mere hypothesis, of course. Let us further suppose that the tending of *one* tree of this kind, gathering and working up its fruit, etc., will just occupy *one* man all the year round, while providing amply *two* men with sustenance, covering, and so forth for the same period.

If, on the territory in question, there were but *one* such tree, and *two* men living on the same, the person who, somehow or other, has succeeded in appropriating the tree to himself will enlist the services of his fellow ; the latter becoming, we will say, not his labourer, but his *lessee* or farmer, on the *métayer* principle. The proprietor of the tree or landlord will receive his share in the produce, *i.e.*, primitive rent.

If the territory occupied by *two* men contain also *two* trees, the second individual, in preference to becoming lessee of the first man, will appropriate, if he can, the second tree ;—and he may do that even in case the work required by the second tree be greater than what he had to do before, or the produce of that tree be smaller than what fell formerly to his share. For man likes to be independent. If, however, a third man come now on the same territory, the two proprietors of trees, or landlords, will compete for his labour,—or, may be, come to an understanding,—so that *one* of them will enlist his services, say as lessee, and receive a portion of the produce of his own tree as rent. In any case, that rent will not be equivalent to the produce of the better tree, *less* that of the inferior one ; but will be equal to the produce of the tree actually leased, *minus* so much produce as the lessee might acquire by becoming tenant to the *other* landlord.

Now, a fourth man coming on the same territory, will be absolutely at the mercy of the two landlords, each requiring but the services of one individual, in order to live idle. Consequently, if the proprietors be not generous

or mutually jealous, the rent each will require and obtain from his lessee will at once rise ; and the latter be allowed to retain in each case only just so much produce as is absolutely needed for his subsistence.

Were there from the beginning many men on the territory, and also many trees, but of different fertility, as long as there remained trees unappropriated no individual would consent to become lessee, unless in that capacity he acquired by his work more produce than *the best* yet unappropriated tree might furnish him. Consequently, some trees might remain unappropriated, although their yield would be sufficient to amply remunerate the cultivator ; in case his work as lessee be better retributed. If, however, the landlords be exacting and the population dense, even the very worst trees will soon become cultivated,—such even whose produce will barely suffice to keep body and soul together.

Such is the state of landed property in primitive countries.

Let now, however, population become so dense that there are more men on the above territory than are needed for its cultivation.

The proprietors of specially prolific trees will then command, not only the services of those individuals who will labour for them in the field, or cultivate the trees and work up their produce in the primitive, usual way ; but being able to retribute their labour with the produce of the trees accepted as rent, landlords will occupy yet other labourers, or operatives, to do for them *extra* or hitherto unaccustomed work. Competition on the part of these operatives, due to the pressure of population, will soon reduce their retribution also to the *minimum* required for subsistence.

Such is a more advanced state in the development of society. Let now, however, the whole territory become a monopoly or the property of a few men. Such trees as barely afford subsistence to the cultivator, and can therefore furnish no rent, will become then in the view of landlords an encumbrance. They will, consequently, seek for the means of making the soil occupied by such trees lucrative to them in some other way ; say by breeding or feeding cattle on the same. But while formerly each tree on the territory, by supposition, required *one* labourer or cultivator, *ten* head of cattle

superseding, we will suppose, just *ten* trees destroyed or left out of cultivation, need, perhaps, the services of only *one* man. Consequently, for every space of territory occupied by ten head of cattle nine men (lessees or labourers) will be discharged, and will have to make their living in some other capacity, as operatives. His property will then, by supposition, become more lucrative to the landlord; but the territory, supposing the cattle consist in horses, will furnish less sustenance for men. Nobody, however, for all that need starve; for the surplus production of the *operatives* being sent off may be the means of importing natural supplies from adjacent territories.

In another stage of progress no fresh territory will be thrown out of cultivation, but yet more cultivators will be discharged—viz., if by machines agricultural work previously performed by labourers may be accomplished cheaper. A still larger proportion of cultivators, or who were so originally, will then be obliged to turn artizans or emigrate.

In course of time, however, yet another stage of development will be reached, when agri-

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cultural land furnishing rent may yet be turned to other uses. Not to speak of land to be used for building purposes,—the breeding of cattle, notably of oxen or sheep, may become so remunerative as to supersede the original cultivation, in our example of trees; in consequence of which a further quantity of men will be thrown out of agricultural work, and turn operatives or artizans, or emigrate.

This is the final stage characterizing the *grande culture*; it is less productive of strictly agricultural produce, but remunerates better the landed proprietor. It produces everything at a minimum cost of labour; but it employs less hands. On the whole, consequently, it feeds less mouths and employs less arms.

This outcome of the “monopoly in land” finds, however, some counterpart in the modern “monopoly of capital.” But further, in the case of capital called “land,” or more strictly “agricultural land,” *one* grain placed in the soil, by dint of labour, etc., will produce—weather permitting—a crop, say of *ten* grains. The landlord furnishes the soil; the farmer the implements, and so forth; finally, the labourer his bodily work. Each of these persons, conse-

quently, claims part of the crop for himself. If you confiscate the income of the landlord, called rent, why not reduce the farmer to the *status* of agricultural labourer by confiscating his surplus income likewise? The plea for confiscating the one would hold good also for confiscating the other.\*

\* POSTSCRIPT.—In reasonings about rent confusion frequently arises from not distinguishing between primitive rent (see p. 46), or rent in kind, and rent paid in money. The value of the latter fluctuates according to the market prices of natural produce; and its importance can only be judged on taking into account the portion of the crop which it virtually represents, as much as the abundance of the latter.

Another remark has to be made supplementary to p. 48. The *best* tree, or, in reality, the best land, in view of appropriation, is not necessarily that containing the best soil, but such as under the circumstances proves most acceptable. Thus swamps, when desiccated, and deserts, when irrigated, may become very fertile land, but yet they will long be neglected in favour of much inferior soil of easier cultivation.

## IV.

## THE DILEMMA OF EDUCATION.

**E**DUCATION, by common belief, is an unmixed boon ; yet it will be easy to show that opinion to be, in great measure, unfounded. In calling here attention to the evils arising from education, it is, however, not our object to point out those dangers, whether real or imaginary, which have frequently been signalized by the enemies of enlightenment as dangers to society and the State ; but rather to certain effects, by which education becomes detrimental to individuals in detail, whom its acquisition is universally supposed to benefit. The hardships suffered by individuals through education may be far from outweighing or compensating its advantages to the community, but in justice they ought, where possible, to be all the more remedied for this very reason.

In dealing with the subject of education, we do not view it here in that light in which

it appears simply as a training of the mind as an instrument; nor in that in which it seems identical with the inculcation of knowledge chiefly derived from books. So far general education stands on a level, if it be not strictly of the same kind, with the training of the hand, for instance, such as may be required in any particular calling, or with the acquisition of such special knowledge as may be requisite in any particular trade. But education, while being subservient also to such practical ends, has, moreover, a distinct influence on the mind not attributable to other tuition or training, and which we may best express, in English, by saying that, through education men not only become intelligent, but *intellectual* to boot. Now it will be this latter aspect or outcome of education that we shall particularly be here concerned with.

In this respect we are at once struck by a capital fact, which it is strange should have hitherto remained either unnoticed or, at all events, been insufficiently brought into notice; although it may simply be pronounced momentous in regard to the destinies of mankind. *The intellectual, as a rule, are not reproductive,*

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*or, at least, not prolific.* Interesting works have been written, and much research has been bestowed on the hereditary nature of genius ; but the glaring fact that, in most cases, the heirs to the bequest are wanting has hitherto escaped observation. Whether it be from the perplexities attending matrimony, which form the subject-matter of Bacon's only poem ; or whether genius be either little attractive to, or little attracted by, woman, or from whatever other causes, as a matter of fact most great geniuses have lived and died single. To speak of modern times only, Bacon, Descartes, Leibnitz, Spinoza, Newton, Voltaire, Kant, and Schopenhauer, form in this respect a most remarkable constellation, which it would be easy to extend to a very galaxy by the addition of lesser stars, or by sweeping through more remote centuries. Equally, or rather still more instructive, perhaps, is the fact that intellect not only acts as an impediment to matrimony, but as a real clog to propagation,—as seems to be inferable from the frequent sterility of the marriages of highly intellectual persons. The names of Davy, Faraday, Humboldt, Heine, J. St. Mill,

Disraeli, chosen almost at random, may be quoted as forming in this respect a most significant contemporaneous array.

The attentive observer of every-day society must no less notice that the greater the culture of female society in the various European countries, the more numerous in the same is, generally, the class of spinsters ; in both which respects England carries off the palm of pre-eminence. And a scrutiny of such individual cases, in our opinion, would directly go to prove that in the struggle for matrimony, and consequently for propagation, the intellectual are particularly apt to be vanquished.\* Now if we may justly assume that mental like bodily aptitudes may be transmitted in descent, it becomes evident that the intellectual, by standing a less chance of propagating their kind, as a type, have an inherent tendency to dwindle if not to disappear. Thus education by its direct agency may recruit the numbers of the intellectual, but,

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\* A lurking suspicion of this may be traced, perhaps, in the well-known saying, but which has fallen now into disuse, that to have given a child to the world is more meritorious than to have presented it with a book.

by its indirect action, it tends to destroy their class.

In this we have laid hands upon a considerable disadvantage under which the intellectual labour, in comparison with the uncultured class ; but, without entering into detail, it may be safely asserted that in this respect society is a greater loser or sufferer than the individuals themselves who are directly concerned. But not merely in respect of matrimony and propagation ; even as regards individual existence or prosperity in life the intellectual are equally under disfavour. The fable of Prometheus, no less than the Biblical story of Adam, would seem to prove the instinctive or aboriginal consciousness possessed by man of the dangers attending on intellect ; while the Homeric tradition, in denouncing the little respect that his kin, significantly called *Kreophylos*, *anglice* the Flesh-born, testified for the poet, constitutes an almost historical proof, derived from the oldest of records, of the little value attached to intellect by men. The history of intellect, if it ever came to be written, would certainly prove its heroes to have generally been

martyrs. Not to quote numerous examples frequently adduced, but from which the general lesson has scarcely ever been drawn, and never applied, genius mostly had reason, like Shakespeare, to say :—

“Looking upon myself, I curse my fate.”

Poets, particularly, the very high-priests in the temple of Intellect, were ever, and are still (now, perhaps, more than ever) the butts of vulgar scoffers ; the adulation so ostentatiously bestowed, exceptionally, upon some being rather the homage accorded to celebrity and success, in this case considered all the more meritorious because achieved in an unlooked-for, not to say unaccountable, way.

Even in our own boasted times, which owe so much to intellect and genius, and in the most civilized of countries, such as England even, the regard shown for their representatives is strictly limited, and their consideration —if such heterogeneous things may be compared—is always less than their reputation. To prove this, we need but mention that while so-called common people are yet utterly ignorant of the very names of their intellectual

benefactors, society shows them still the cold shoulder, for not being pecuniarily with it on the same level.

The action of states, represented by their enlightened governments, whether in the shape of ministers, parliaments, or sovereigns, proves the same thing. As a patent fact, for instance, all kinds of distinction or merit except those of intellect, *κατ' εξοχην*, are deemed worthy of a peerage in England ; the country where intellect, on the whole, perhaps is most prized. Nay, no discoverer, no philosopher, no scholar or poet,\* not even any practical inventor, has hitherto been deemed by England worthy of a coronet, which is habitually bestowed, not only for other meritorious service to the State, but even, and that as a matter of course, upon the possessors of great hereditary or, sometimes, personally acquired wealth. Now if England, as a nation, were desirous either of showing a high appreciation of intellect, or of favouring its representatives, undoubtedly there should among its peerage be names or titles recalling past or

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\* The recent elevation of the Laureate to the peerage constitutes the first exception to the above remark, enunciated by us long before.

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present intellectual glories ; and that not merely, as is actually the case, adventitiously. Yet, without entering into politics, we may assert that not only is a peerage still the most highly prized public recognition in England ; but, considering what a pitiless struggle life has become, we ought to rejoice even in the existence of an ideal institution, of a charmed circle, so to speak, in which hereditary gifts of intellect, especially, might easily shine and develop.

True, intellect, even in England, rarely achieves such income as forms the necessary appendage of a coronet, and the State, who will not accord the title, is even less disposed to furnish the endowment. In point of fact, if we except novel writers,\*—whose occupation has become a manufacture, and whose calling a trade,—and some few lucky inventors, the retribution of intellectual work, of the highest as well as of the lowest order, has become now so much reduced as to constitute one of the most crying and glaring modern evils. While

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\* The Poet Laureate also, whose rhymes, sense or nonsense, are paid for their weight in hundred pound bank-notes.

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in the Middle Ages the mere knowledge of reading and proficiency in writing, or in the *three R's*, formed a stepping-stone to the originally mean, but yet always, of necessity, influential, Chancellorship ; writing, by which is understood nowadays the art of literary composition, has become so vulgarized as to constitute the least remunerative occupation perhaps of any extant. Not only does the compositor receive higher pay, on the average, than the book-composer, but writing, as a trade, constitutes the only one in which to make a living is not only occasionally, as in other branches, but constantly, precarious. A shoemaker, a tailor, wherever they go, are sure to live ; but not so the literary man, who is not only restrained to a very few places, but always and everywhere finds there is a glut in the market.\*

We fully understand how objectionable, in the abstract, is the barter of mind for money ; and we entirely sympathise with those Athenians who contemned the sophists for taking fees for lessons. Indeed, none more than we should

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\* See next paper.

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rejoice if Intellect inundated the whole world, so as to become itself priceless as well as priceless, like flowing water or all-pervading air. But if, through such event, those whose mind is their only patrimony, or whose brain is their only instrument of labour, become still more depressed in social status, or condemned to continual privations, surely the injustice of it must be deemed glaring, and the change could scarcely be welcomed. Although far as yet from the above state, the world of Intellect is already, as it were, under its shadow. In plain words, the intellectual producer has actually outstripped the consumer ; or, to use still more familiar language, the intellectual supply has increased more rapidly than the intellectual demand.

As regards sciences, especially, the only one that men nowadays value is *savoir faire* ; and the only one that women appreciate is *savoir vivre*. Knowledge, it is true, has long been proclaimed equivalent to power ; but neither States nor society anywhere have ever accepted it for a Great power. To prove how small is as yet the interest taken by society in scientific pursuits, it were but necessary to recall the fact

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that the one *national* event connected with the two English universities is—a boat-race; or to compare the emotion caused by any great scientific discovery with the excitement occasioned by the Derby race. And does not chess, the most arid of games, count more actual votaries than any, even the most recreative or “amusing of sciences? To quell all doubt regarding the importance attached to intellect, it were finally but necessary to compare some figures; for instance, the sum for which books and printed matter generally are annually reported among the various items of national produce, with the sum representing the national expenditure for tobacco or tea, be it either in England or France, in Germany or in America.

If we consider now education in its special effects on the lower orders, among whom the greatest efforts are being made at present to diffuse it, we shall find—at least if we look at the matter dispassionately, unbiassed either by ancient prejudices or by modern proclivities—that, in their case also, education works more harm than good to the individual.

By instinct rather than reason, the working classes for a long time resisted the introduction

of machinery ; and their instinct has proved true, although their reasoning may sometimes have been bad. Notwithstanding so-called instances of *self-help*,—a few dozen examples picked out of a hundred, nay, several hundred million instances,—the operative nowadays has a less chance of becoming independent than he had in previous times ; and the fate of the mechanic so far, thanks to machinery, has become assimilated to that of the agricultural labourer. Formerly every 'prentice in due course of time became master, but now both classes of workmen continue in a state of dependency for their whole lifetime, and their progeny become addicted to the same position by a rule less formal but scarcely less stringent than the regulations of caste. Machinery also, at first blush, promised to reduce either the number of labourers or their working time. As a matter of fact, however, "the hewers of wood and drawers of water" in our actual social organization, have become more numerous in absolute, nay, even in relative numbers, and their working hours still extend over morn, day, and frequently night. As regards their style of living, and without entering into the question

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of wages, thrift, drink, and so forth, the inspection of the tenements, houses, or apartments occupied by the operative classes in all European capitals and manufacturing towns proves how wretched is still their condition. In a word, the effect or output of human labour, by the aid of engines and machinery, has vastly increased and multiplied, in many cases has even become prodigious. By machinery, also, human labour has frequently lost its brutal character, or ceased to be that of a beast of burden; much work having been transferred from legs and arms to hands, fingers, or even eyes. Still, on the whole, the life of the working classes continues miserable.\*

Now, in such plight, to spread education among working-men is sure to render their condition still more painful. Education creates refinement, and consequent desires and wants; but in their present situation operatives have not, nor does education furnish them, the means for satisfying such. True, those who are the first to acquire some proficiency or knowledge due to education may benefit by the same; but their very diffusion, as experience every day

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\* See *first* paper.

shows in the case even of the more elevated profession of commercial clerks, soon deprives those acquirements of any commercial value, selling price, or purchasing power ; and those who finally profit by them, *gratis*, are the employers or taskmasters. We repeat what we have said at the outset : it is not on account of the dangerous tendencies which may be implanted in the working classes through education that we deprecate its diffusion among them ; but we maintain that an age in which to support a family, not decently or comfortably, but simply above starving-point, not only husbands, but wives and children also, must toil from morn to night, far from their households, for wages,—has no right or call to educate the people for the sole end of making the lower classes still more useful to their employers or to society at large.

And now for a last word upon a most delicate subject. Education, in making man intellectual or refined, renders him also, to use an almost obsolete word, virtuous, or morally fastidious. As is well known, Plato, in one of his discourses, broaches the question whether “justice”—*i.e.*, morality and virtue—conduces to happiness

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in life ; and although the conclusion is in favour of the moral principle, all the best arguments are really against it. Perhaps Plato, with the fate of Socrates before his eyes, may have used in this instance a caution similar to that employed by the author of *Utopia*. At all events, a still higher authority, the Book of Books, in prognosticating of the fate of the rich after death, does not seem to take it for granted that high morality leads to great prosperity in life. In studying the political history of great nations, such as the Romans of old, we should, moreover, be startled and shocked by the hitherto generally overlooked, or rarely recognised, fact, that their most distinguished leaders, eminent for patriotic or private virtue, generally came to grief, and an unnatural, untimely end. In fact, it has justly been observed by acute thinkers, that the slow but certain and continual action of patriotic self-sacrifice results in a final "weeding out" of the nobler elements of nations, and thus accounts for their ultimate decay. On the whole, and summing up the main scientific upshot of our discussion, we venture upon an assertion, which will disagreeably surprise :—

*If, in the struggle for existence, the individuals most apt to live overcome the rest,—which, in fact, is a mere truism,—and thus continue their breed; as regards mankind, the fittest to live are generally the most unworthy of existence.*

## V.

## THE LITERARY ARTIZAN.

BRAIN-WORKERS, although a less numerous, are certainly a not less interesting, and scarcely a less important, class of the community than hand-workers ; yet their woes, which are crying, have hitherto attracted but little attention.

The *status* of author was never an enviable one, says Isaac Disraeli :—“ The studies of the true author insulate him in society. He will receive but little encouragement, and less remuneration. . . . The most successful author can obtain no equivalent for the labours of his life. No one believes these so precarious as they are, until disappointed, distressed, . . . the noblest mind sinks to a venal dependent or a sordid labourer,—changed from a vestal into a prostitute.” And elsewhere, “ Authors,” he says, “ continue poor, and booksellers become opulent,—an astonishing result.”

In our own times, there are some or even

many exceptions to this rule, when the—now Lord—Poet Laureate receives for a poem of some thirty lines £300 from an enterprising publisher; not to speak of the large sums paid to such writers as Dickens, Macaulay, or our above authority's own son, when Lord Beaconsfield. But the more brilliant that of successful authors, the harder has become the lot of those who only struggle for fame and success.

OLDCASTLE, in his quaint little book, which will become one of the curiosities of literature of our time, with all tenderness for the interests of the *exploiteurs* of the Press, has yet given to the wary reader a pretty fair insight into the vicissitudes to which the aspiring modern author exposes himself. But woe to him who, putting his trust in Oldcastle's advice, instead of simply heeding his facts, should, while standing a waverer at the fatal Herculean crossing, be swayed by it to select the rugged and narrow up-hill paths leading to the thorny and stony fields of literature, in preference to the much smoother and much broader avenues giving access to other avocations. Yet there is a warning glaring enough, and openly avowing the disguised man-

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traps that await the trespasser on those fields, to be found in the stereotype notice borne in prominent place by every newspaper and periodical almost,—“ We cannot undertake to return rejected communications ; and to this rule we can make no exception.” But one generation ago, Charles Dickens achieved fame and success through some “ Sketches ” stealthily dropped by him into an editor’s box,—a very “ lion’s mouth ” nowadays. Delphine Gay, the immortal authoress of the inimitable “ Courriers,” signed by her as “ Vicomte de Launay,” in similar fashion became celebrated, and the wife of Emile de Girardin, the editor of the newspaper she had contributed to. Guizot, likewise, first made the acquaintance of his future wife through a literary correspondence set up by herself while a governess, if we recollect aright. Victor Hugo, also, *at that time*, would never fail to acknowledge and answer the letters of literary fledglings, desirous of obtaining his opinion, advice, or recommendation. But, nowadays, the very Crœsuses of the Press, who, in Fleet Street or Printing House Square, have achieved incredible fortunes by the literary labours of others, do not think it worth while to appoint

some underpaid clerk for posting rejected MSS., even when forwarded by authors, accompanied by stamped and directed envelopes.

What line of trade lies under similar disadvantages, we ask? Like the huckster, the matches' boy or flower girl, "the literary gent" needs must proffer his wares; but he is thought fit to be treated only on a par with the very streetwalker, who flaunts her charms in public thoroughfares. And if not repelled by such circumstance, what awaits, at best, the needy literary *débutant* at the hands of the high and mighty despot, called "editor"? Weeks, nay, months will elapse before the latter shall vouchsafe a reply, if any, "regretting," of course, "and so forth,"—according as the printed formula may have it. The MS., scarcely, or but hastily glanced at by some incompetent or arrogant sub-editor, in the meantime will probably have become "stale, flat, and unprofitable" to its author,—fit only to be consigned by him to that limbo of oblivion, the fire, or waste-paper basket.\*

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\* And what if, by some extraordinary chance, the MS. has really been accepted? Newspapers circulating a quarter million copies pay, in England, *two pounds* for a one

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Such, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, is the fate of the would-be contributor to periodical literature. If wise in his generation, he perhaps may listen to the kindly advice tendered possibly by some sharpish newspaper proprietor or manager, with an eye always to business, to him in the course of his peregrinations, viz., not totally to abandon the vocation of writer, but to combine with it the more lucrative occupation of advertisements canvasser—meritorious feats as such being apt to command also extra favourable consideration for literary achievements. If indisposed, however, to follow such

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column review of a book, the mere reading of which may have occupied days. German periodicals, circulating above 100,000 copies, pay for the column, containing almost as much matter, a *honorarium* of 15 marks (15s.) to authors whose contributions they particularly appreciate. Another German “family-paper,” circulating weekly 10,000 copies, pays 72 marks a sheet, or 9s. a 4to page, for articles from authors of literary and scientific repute or position. A French Review, published in Italy in the style of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, “accepts” articles, if unasked for, as gratuitous; if sent by invitation, 50 francs is allotted per sheet, or 2s. 6d. a *page*. Some French periodicals deduct so much for authors’ corrections, that the compositor’s work appears tenfold as valuable as the author’s.

friendly suggestions, our aspirant author, having ceased from troubling editors, will now, perhaps, turn still more ambitious, and begin to harass publishers—a mass of “rejected communications” being already on hand, which heart has failed him to annihilate through fire or otherwise. His case then, if possible, will become still more hopeless.

Formerly, rapacious booksellers were content to rob authors of their books; but now, in accordance with the spirit of the age and the progress of civilization, they mulct him also of his money, if by chance he has got any, through the new mode of publication, “on commission.” Great publishers, however, will not even thus lend always their firm, on such absolutely secure terms, unless the name of the writer afford some extra certainty of his becoming a really rich booty. At all events, no publisher whatever will buy the MS. of an author unless he have achieved literary fame beforehand. How that is to be done by an impecunious writer—and writers generally are impecunious—is a question or dilemma which publishers will trouble themselves very little about, their business being to make money, not to think.

Preposterous as is the whole organization of trade, the height of absurdity is, however, reached when mercantile men are to sit in judgment upon the books that are to go forth to the public ; their principle being, of necessity, not to print the books that ought to be read, but those that will sell. Thus it is no exaggeration, under present circumstances, to assert that many an important work stands a less chance nowadays of seeing the light than before the age of printing. "We thank you for offering us your proposed volume, and regret that we are unable to speculate in its production,"—such is the polite formula which extinguishes many a valuable book in its cradle. The liberty of the Press, both in regard to volumes and articles, has thus become a very "snare and delusion,"—accessible only, as most liberties are, to the powerful or wealthy. Formerly, publishers hired so-called "hacks," who wrote for them books which were paid for in advance, in order that the writer might not be without sustenance ; but now authors should be capitalists, and not only able to live upon their money, but embark also such in publication. In case of success, the author will receive

less from the proceeds, for every copy sold, than the mere retail bookseller of whom the public purchase it. What, for instance, would the farmer say if the mill-owner proposed to him to work up his wool into cloth and let him have half of the profits, the value of the wool being counted for nothing? Or would the printer furnish his work on the "half risk and half profit system," his labour being again counted for nothing? Yet such are the terms for authors upon which most books are brought out at the present day.\*

Says David Hume:—"Such a superiority do the pursuits of Literature possess above every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity, merits the pre-eminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions." Such is not the opinion of our own time, at all events. On the contrary, to achieve but mediocrity in a calling which has pretensions to superiority,

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\* A printed form issued by a great German publishing firm lying before us states as their conditions—50 per cent. of the price for every volume sold goes to the author, who bears all costs of printing, publishing, and advertising from his own pocket.

such as literature, is considered as a crime rather than misdemeanour, and punished accordingly with hard labour and periodical fasting. But this, of course, does not prevent men of great intellect dying also occasionally of hunger; nor does it hinder lucrative literary posts and positions being frequently filled by persons of inferior talent.

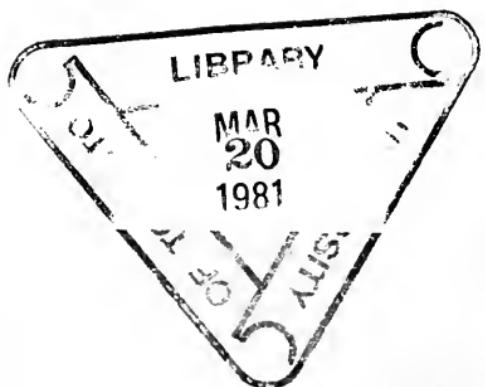
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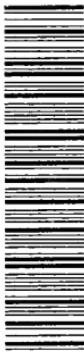
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